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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000038

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: MDC SPOKESMAN CHAMISA ON MDC POSITION, U.S. POLICY

REF: A. HARARE 06
[1](#)B. PRETORIA 43

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) MDC spokesman Nelson Chamisa told polecon chief on January 14 that the MDC was resolved to condition entry into government on satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai would meet with Zimbabwean president Mugabe in the next few days to either resolve these issues or tell Mugabe to form a government without the MDC. Chamisa also opined that U.S. rhetoric on Mugabe was empty and counterproductive. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Chamisa said that the MDC at its strategy meeting in South Africa had affirmed the position of its National Council to enter a transitional government of national unity only if outstanding issues were resolved (Ref A). He said that a meeting between Zimbabwean president Mugabe and MDC leader Tsvangirai was tentatively scheduled for January 16, although it could slip until next week depending on scheduling conflicts. South African president Motlanthe would preside over the meeting; mediator Thabo Mbeki would likely also attend. Tsvangirai, according to Chamisa, would use the meeting to present the MDC demands on outstanding issues. If Mugabe failed to make concessions, Tsvangirai would tell him he should form a government without the MDC.

[1](#)3. (C) Chamisa said the MDC strategy was to put the ball in ZANU-PF's court by putting forth the MDC position for ZANU-PF to accept or reject. Negotiations and talks about negotiations had gone on too long, and it was time for a decision as to whether or not there would be a government of national unity. The MDC, according to Chamisa, doubted Mugabe would agree to share governorships and reallocate ministries. To concede half the governorships to the MDC, which would involve removing five of the 10 newly-appointed

governors, would be viewed by ZANU-PF membership as a sign of weakness. Perhaps more importantly, governors were important to ZANU-PF electoral organizational efforts and party patronage in their provinces, and ZANU-PF would lose this advantage if some of its governors were replaced by MDC members. As to ministries, Chamisa was doubtful that ZANU-PF would agree to a reallocation that would weaken its position in government.

14. (C) Assuming the collapse of the September 15 inter-party agreement, Chamisa told us the MDC would pursue a multi-faceted strategy of public and diplomatic outreach and, in collaboration with civil society, mass mobilization. We asked why such a strategy could now be successful when it had failed in the past. Chamisa responded that the MDC had learned from its many mistakes which would aid it in going forward with new strategies.

15. (C) Turning to U.S. policy, Chamisa said rhetoric that "Mugabe must go" was empty and counterproductive. Regime opponents initially hoped that the rhetoric would be complemented by action. Inaction on the part of the U.S. was causing people to lose heart. Further, ZANU-PF was using U.S. statements as a pretext to crack down on the MDC and civil society, both of which it was accusing of collaborating with the U.S. to bring about regime change. We asked Chamisa what concrete actions the U.S. and international community could take. He responded: military intervention to remove the regime, indictments of Mugabe and other ZANU-PF officials in international courts, and sanctioning of the Reserve Bank

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of Zimbabwe.

COMMENT

16. (C) While there are some in the MDC who would like to enter into government with ZANU-PF and some who do not want to be part of a government of national unity under any circumstances, the position of the MDC appears clear: it will enter into a power-sharing government --with or without Mugabe-- only if outstanding issues are resolved on MDC terms. A Mugabe-Tsvangirai meeting, if it takes place, will be critical in determining whether the differences between the parties can be bridged. We agree with Chamisa that it is unlikely ZANU-PF will make the concessions the MDC is demanding. Regardless, there may be an end to the on-going SADC-sponsored process within the next couple of weeks. END COMMENT.

MCGEE